

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASMARA 00004 031433Z POSS DUPE
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03
NEA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01
ACDA-07 /082 W
-----031809Z 055825 /53

R 031345Z JAN 77
FM AMCONSUL ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4302
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
COMIDEASTFOR
NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA
NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI
CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0004

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS ET
SUBJECT: EVENTS IN ERITREA: FUEL SITUATION EASES DESPITE MASSAWA
ATTACK

1. ON THE MORNING OF DEC. 31, A GROUP OF INSURGENTS ATTACKED THE AGIP POL STORAGE DEPOT IN MASSAWA. USING ROCKETS AND SMALL ARMS THEY WERE ABLE TO IGNITE AT LEAST ONE AND PERHAPS TWO LARGE STORAGE TANKS AND TO DAMAGE SEVERAL OTHER TANKS AND BUILDINGS. MOST OF THE FUEL LOST WAS EITHER DIESEL OR BULK OIL. IN THE ATTACK, SEVERAL EPMG TROOPS WERE REPORTED KILLED AND WOUNDED. THE AGIP DEPOT, WHICH SHARES FACILITIES WITH SHELL, CONTAINS ABOUT A DOZEN LARGE TANKS AND AS IT HAS ITS OWN OFF-SHORE PIPELINE TERMINAL, IT HAS BEEN USED AS THE PRINCIPLE COMMERCIAL FACILITY
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IN MASSAWA. THERE ARE FURTHER STORAGE FACILITIES AT THE MOBIL AND TOTAL DEPOT WHICH ARE WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE ETHIOPIAN NAVAL BASE.

2. IN RETALIATION FOR THE INSURGENT ATTACK, A DETACHMENT OF EPMG TROOPS ATTACKED THE VILLAGE OF HARIGO 5 KM. SOUTH OF MASSAWA. IN THE ATTACK THEY KILLED SEVERAL VILLAGERS AND BURNED AND LOOTED

THE VILLAGE. THE INSURGENT ACTION AND THE EPMG REPRISAL HAVE HEIGHTENED TENSIONS IN MASSAWA AS RESIDENTS FEAR THAT INSURGENTS WILL STRIKE AGAIN TO AVENGE THE HARIGO ATTACK; THEREBY REKINDLING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE.

3. IN ASMARA, THE CONVOY WHICH LEFT FOR MASSAWA ON DEC. 30 RETURNED TO ASMARA ON JAN. 2 WITHOUT INCIDENT. THE EPMG AUTHORITIES APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT DESPITE THE ASSAULT ON THE AGIP DEPOT, THE FUEL SUPPLY SYSTEM TO ASMARA HAS BEEN ADEQUATELY RESTORED TO AGAIN PERMIT THE SALE OF MOGAS IN THE CITY. AT PRESENT MOST STATIONS HAVE RESUMED SALES, BUT AT LEVELS BELOW THOSE ALLOTTED BY THE RATIONING SYSTEM. THOSE DRIVERS WITH 15 LITERS PER WEEK COUPONS RECEIVE ONLY 10 LITERS, AND THOSE WITH 25 LITER COUPONS RECEIVE 15 LITERS.

4. ON THE MILITARY FRONT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE FOCUS ON THE EPMG EFFORT TO RELIEVE THE 15TH BATTALION GARRISON AT NACFA. IT IS WIDELY REPORTED IN ASMARA THAT THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES HAVE SUFFERED SEVERAL SETBACKS. MANY REPORTS GO WELL BEYOND THE LIMITS OF CREDULITY, INCLUDING ONE WHICH CLAIMS THAT TWO ISRAELI "ADVISORS" TO THE EPMG WERE CAPTURED BY REBELS, ALONG WITH 800 ETHIOPIAN TROOPS. THIS IS THE FOURTH TIME IN 18 MONTHS THE REPORTING OFFICER HAS RECEIVED LOCAL REPORTS OF ISRAELIS BEING CAPTURED BY THE ERITREAN INSURGENTS; NONE OF THE PREVIOUS CLAIMS HAVE PROVEN TO HAVE ANY SUBSTANCE. THERE ARE MORE RELIABLE REPORTS THAT THE EPMG IS AIRLIFTING REINFORCEMENTS DIRECTLY TO KEREN FROM MAKALLE. THE LEVEL OF AIR ACTIVITY OBSERVED FROM ASMARA WOULD TEND TO SUBSTANTIATE THESE REPORTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM, SUPPLIES, PROVINCE, TERRORISTS, MILITARY GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ASMARA00004
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770002-0111
Format: TEL
From: ASMARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770186/aaaacxgw.tel
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Litigation History:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
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Retention: 0
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Review Exemptions: n/a
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Subject: EVENTS IN ERITREA: FUEL SITUATION EASES DESPITE MASSAWA ATTACK
TAGS: PINS, ET
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